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THE **GIVING BACK** ISSUE

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Matt Coker
Managing Editor
Patrice Marsters
SEnior Editor S, nEWS & InVESUgaUon S
R. Scott Moxley
Staff Writ Er S
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food Editor
Cynthia Rebolledo
Editoria L aSSiStant/proofr Ead Er
Lisa Black
Contrib Uting Writ Er S
Nikki Nelsen Jefferson VanBilliard

Editorial art
photograph Er S
Nikki Nelsen

Production
art dir ECtor
Federico Medina
prod UCtion Manag Er
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Sal ES
pUbLiShEr
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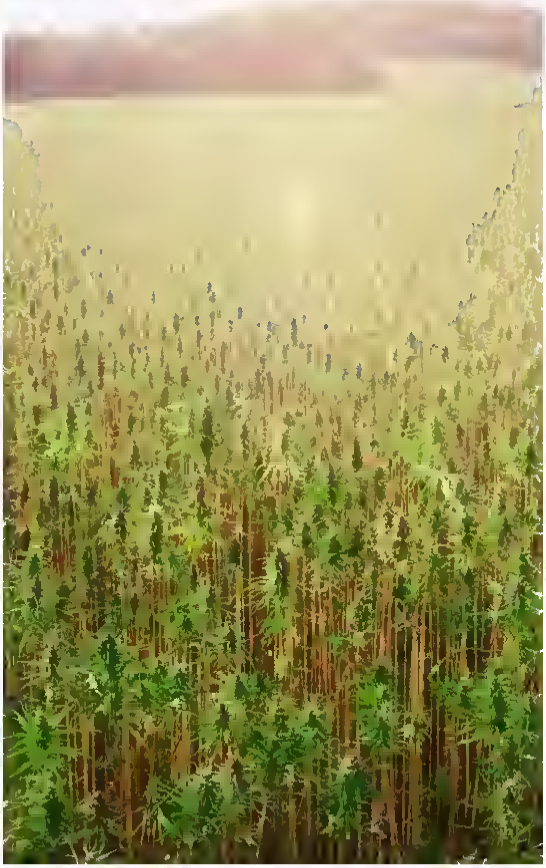
EDITOR'S NOTE

Behold, it's *OC Weekly*'s latest edition of Rolling Paper, which this quarter is dedicated to the ways the cannabis industry is giving back to Orange County. Nikki Nelsen contributes four (!) stories tied to that theme, focusing on New Generation dispensary's vital help for the homeless, Bloom Farms' local hunger-relief efforts, Hemp Authority's pro-environment stance and 55 Hydroponics' assistance for home growers.

Despite this rampant outbreak of charity within the cannabis community, it presents challenges, as does banking. So, we asked the best cannabis lawyer in the county, Christopher Glew, about both topics in the Better Ask Glew advice column. He actually comes up with out-of-the-bong thinking when it comes to ways the industry can benefit their neighborhoods. I encourage you to give Better Ask Glew, Nelsen's stories and our special Toke of the Week collection by Jefferson VanBilliard your full attention. Then give and give often.

—Matt Coker



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THE DISPENSARY EVOLUTION

With the boom of recreational cannabis in California, the industry has seen an evolution in medicinal and adult-use dispensaries, and everything has changed. In the past, dispensaries were only found tucked away in industrial areas with bars on their windows and open jars of flower.

Today, customers have legal dispensaries like **King's Crew**. Prominently located on Pacific Coast Highway and 7th Street in Long Beach, the 3,500 sq. ft. retail space looks more like a high-end department store with an inviting California-bungalow vibe.

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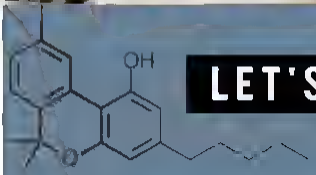


LET'S TALK CBD

Whether you're a seasoned smoker or a first-timer, chances are – you've heard of **cannabidiol**, or **"CBD"**. Extracted from cannabis or hemp, this trendy compound doesn't produce any psychoactive effects you would otherwise get from THC, and has been credited for naturally easing symptoms including anxiety, pain and inflamation, insomnia, and many more.

King's Crew carries a wide array of CBD products including vape pens, tinctures, edibles, lotions, soaps and bath soaks, and even CBD for your pet.

DID YOU KNOW?

'CBD from cannabis' is much more effective than 'CBD from hemp'? Ask questions! Not all CBD is created equally, and only 'CBD from cannabis' can be found in a licensed dispensary.

GIVING BACK IS IN NEW GENERATION'S DNA

By Nikki Nelse N

New Generation dispensary staff gather under a white popup tent outside a shelter at Santa Ana Boulevard and Ross Street, as homeless people line up for new clothing, socks and water bottles. The workers stepped away from their air-conditioned facility on the other side of Santa Ana, from which the dispensary sells THC and CBD products, to give back to people downtown.

"The community has been there to help us and support us, it's only right and just for us to be there for our community," explains Chris Costales, New Generation's head of marketing, as his co-workers pass out clothing and water on June 15.

The dispensary also brought in four barbers from the Image shop in Corona to give more than 15 people free haircuts, trims and shaves in preparation for warm summer weather.

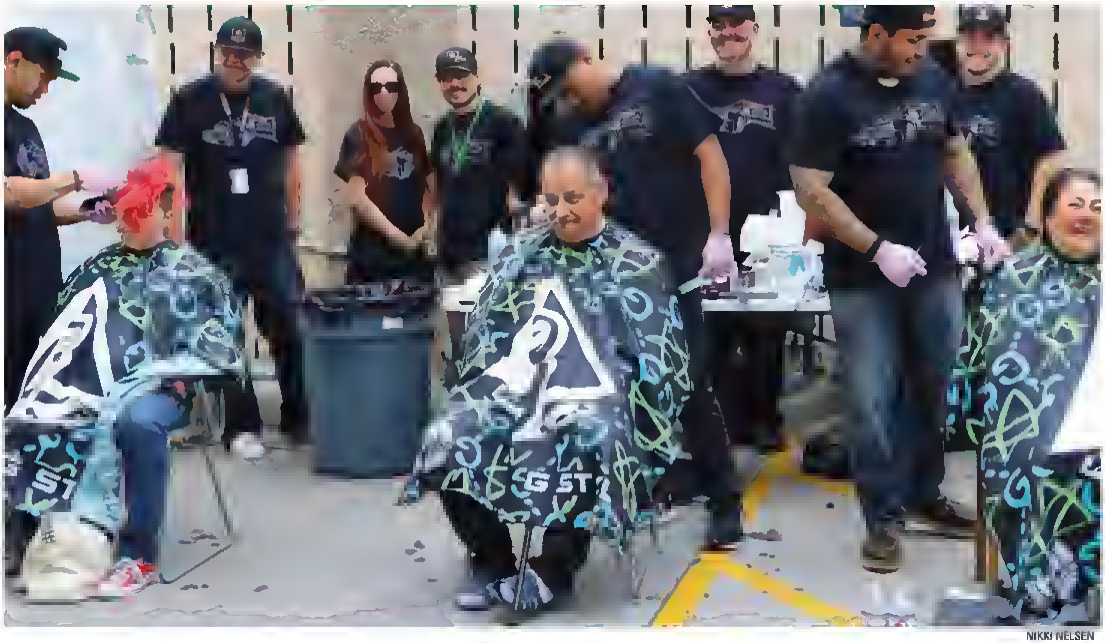
More than anything, the day of giving allowed the dispensary staff to speak directly with some of the more than 450 people in need who stay in the shelter.

The day before, New Generation accepted the donations of socks, shirts, shorts and water bottles. Patients who donated were offered price breaks on certain products chosen by dispensary staff and vendors. The dispensary hosted a patient-appreciation day at the same time that featured various cannabis vendors, two of which also chose to give back to the community. Canndescent and Platinum Vape offered patients who donated to the drive $1 top-shelf prerolls. By the end of the day, New Generation was brimming with piles of new socks, shirts and shorts, as well as multiple cases of water—all for the homeless shelter. "We give back a significant amount, and it's not just us—it's also the community that comes in," Costales says. "They hear about the event from word of mouth, and then they tell their friends. Before you know it, we have a huge stack of clothes that are going back into the community."

PHOTOS BY NIKKI NELSEN

"We give back a significant amount, and it's not just us—it's also the community that comes in."

–Chris Costales, New GeNeratio N



NIKKI NELSEN

Naw Generation's efforts stem from the experienca of ownar Justin Shively, who wanted to halp the homeless after becoming aware of their situations at the Santa Ana Civic Canter and in the Santa Ana riverbed in 2016. Since then, the company began giving to Midnight Mission at the Courtyard in Santa Ana twice a year (in tha summar and in tha fall); hosting a clothing and food driva during Thanksgiving, plus a Christmastime toy drive; and encouraging staff to donate to tha Orange County Rescue Mission and the YMCA.

The dispensary—which is fully compliant, offering both madical and recreational manjuana—sells a vanety of flower, concentrates, tinctures, adiblas, cartridges and CBO products. The clinic also sells glass products and clothing apparel.

But the staff puts cannabis education at high importance and works to da-stigmatize the cannabis industry. "That was one of the huge things when I hired on, and it was mada apparent that we do want to change tha stigma around tha industry," Costales says. "And that's why we do a lot of charity events. Smokars do care."

New Generation has big things in the works. It recently received a cultivation licanse, which allows staff to grow the plant inside the facility on Sagerstrom Avenua. The team also plans to offer even lower pricas to its patients by launching a membership program similar to Costco's.

"Wa have some new lines coming out that we ara going to be running through our distribution line," Costales adds. "We are going to be having some outstanding sales that peopla are not going to be able to compete with."

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Hemp Authority Helps People and the Planet Thrive

By Nikki Nelse N

Jesse Clymer had a dream of getting into business, of selling clothing, accessories and skin products using hemp-derived products, but with more sustainable methods. So he did his research and opened an independent, online-only hemp store.

But that wasn't all he envisioned. "I wanted a company that added some kind of good or value to it," Clymer explains. "I realized that was the direction I wanted to take so I could help promote hemp products."

Hemp Authority employs sustainable practices, from the production to packaging to his storefront using recycled paper and the best conservation methods. The store offers everything for your hemp needs, selling an array of clothing, accessories, socks, beauty products, topicals and yarn. It also produces business cards made of hemp for companies interested in being more eco-friendly.

And Clymer's vision has caught on. After starting online-only, Hemp Authority drew so many customers that he had to open a brick-and-mortar storefront in Garden Grove, though it's currently open only on weekends.

Having done things solo for the past six years, Clymer hopes to hire staff to help with production, as well as to continue educating people about the benefits of cannabis. He sees his primary responsibility as helping businesses reduce their carbon footprints through sustainable practices, starting with shipping. "A big part of hemp is the environmentally friendly aspects of it, so I have a company that provides all that," Clymer says. "I try to reduce shipping materials, use recycled materials like recycled cotton in clothing, and not use chemicals in beauty products. I'm trying to provide a natural and holistic lifestyle."

Clymer says he lives for those ah-ha moments in which people come back to exclaim how much his products have helped them and how they have now become believers. He has even converted his father, who was against marijuana, into becoming a cannabis supporter who promotes his son's products.

Derived from the Sativa cannabis plant, hemp uses only the portion that doesn't get you high. It was first observed to be able to be made into usable fiber more than 10,000 years ago. As the process has evolved, it can also now be turned into paper, plastic, yarn and food.

Hemp Authority products are sold inside legal dispensaries around Southern California, Oregon and Colorado. But Clymer's primary focus is his own business and bringing his thriving operation to the forefront of hemp and CBD sales. The company also works with national cannabis organizations such as the National Hemp Association by donating, providing free hemp-based business cards and helping any way it can.

But Clymer wants new customers to know that Hemp Authority is not a dispensary. His store only sells locally sourced hemp and CBD products. "We definitely get everyday people coming in here thinking it's a dispensary," he says. "I am trying to de-stigmatize cannabis as a whole to present that there are a lot of benefits other than medical, that is a big part of this company."

Clymer vows to teach as many people as possible about the natural alternatives and eco-friendly products he offers. "Just having this alternative for a lot of different things, I think many people are steering in that direction," he says, "and as they're doing that, our growth is reflective of that. We are just going with the trend of society."

Hemp Authority
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PHOTOS BY [illegible] NELSON

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BETTER ASK GLEW:

BANKING AND CHARITABLE CHALLENGES

CANNABIS ATTORNEY EXTRAORDINAIRE CHRIS GLEW ON THE CHALLENGES FOR DISPENSARIES

BY MATT COKER

OC WEEKLY: *More than half of the 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, have legalized cannabis use to some degree. Are retailers still experiencing the same issues with banking?*

CHRISTOPHER GLEW: Cannabis retailers still struggle to find stable, legitimate banking solutions in today's environment. Banking institutions are struggling right along with the business owners as they watch millions of dollars walk away. There are many examples of folks such as the Fourth Corner in Colorado attempting to service the financial needs of the cannabis industry and ancillary businesses. They have all been stymied by the Federal Reserve denying them access to a master account. There is a lot of momentum in several states, including California, to develop state banks specifically for the industry. This would serve a dual function of allowing the state greater transparency for regulatory purposes and, of course, revenue generation. On the federal level, House Resolution 1595, "The Secure And Fair Enforcement Banking Act of 2019 (Safe Banking Act)," is grinding its way through the arduous journey to completion. This would stop the Fed from targeting financial institutions for choosing to take on cannabis clientele. This bill has cleared the House, and now the last hurdle is Senator Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), the chairman of the Senate Banking Committee. Crapo is the linchpin now as he determines whether or not the act will get its first hearing in the Senate.

Do any banks in California offer a solution?

Right now, I am aware of only a few, and they allow limited access. I am aware of the Santa Cruz Community Credit Union, and the [United Food and Commercial Workers] has a credit union accessible to a limited number of member shops. I know they charge a fee to the shops to help offset the additional internal auditing requirements necessary for the bank to remain compliant. Otherwise, it is all safety deposit boxes and armored guards.

Your banking comments remind me that this Rolling Paper edition is dedicated to those in the cannabis industry giving back to their communities, through services they provide to charitable causes they champion. Do the challenges they face with banking extend to being charitable?

Due to the fact they have problems finding banking solutions, that can make it more difficult to find charitable partners. Many in the cannabis sector have an altruistic spirit, something you can see on an industry-wide scale with SACA [Santa Ana Cannabis Association]. And we have had a lot of difficulty finding dance partners to make charitable contributions with. When we applied to cities for entitlements, a requirement was for merit-based applications, which we fine-tuned to show what kind of community benefit the organizations would provide, such as offering assistance to veterans, veteran hiring, 100 percent local hiring, higher minimum wages. We invited the unions into the shops. All these things are seen as socially uplifting, such as hosting job fairs—you name it.

What has been the biggest hurdle when it comes to being charitable?

For instance, there's the Boys & Girls Club at the Delhi Center, which has the Santa Ana Unified School District as a backup. It's not that we get the cold shoulder, but there is usually a long conversation. It starts with them being really appreciative of what we want to do for it, but being concerned with the image, the optics. I get it. I understand most school districts are not sponsored by Budweiser. I have not seen a Santa Ana high school wrapped in a Budweiser banner. That being said, it's become very interesting to me that no one has been able to bridge the gap between the two. Hey, look, if there are dance partners out there that have legitimate charitable organizations with a youth purpose, isn't there a way we can find to serve both interests?

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

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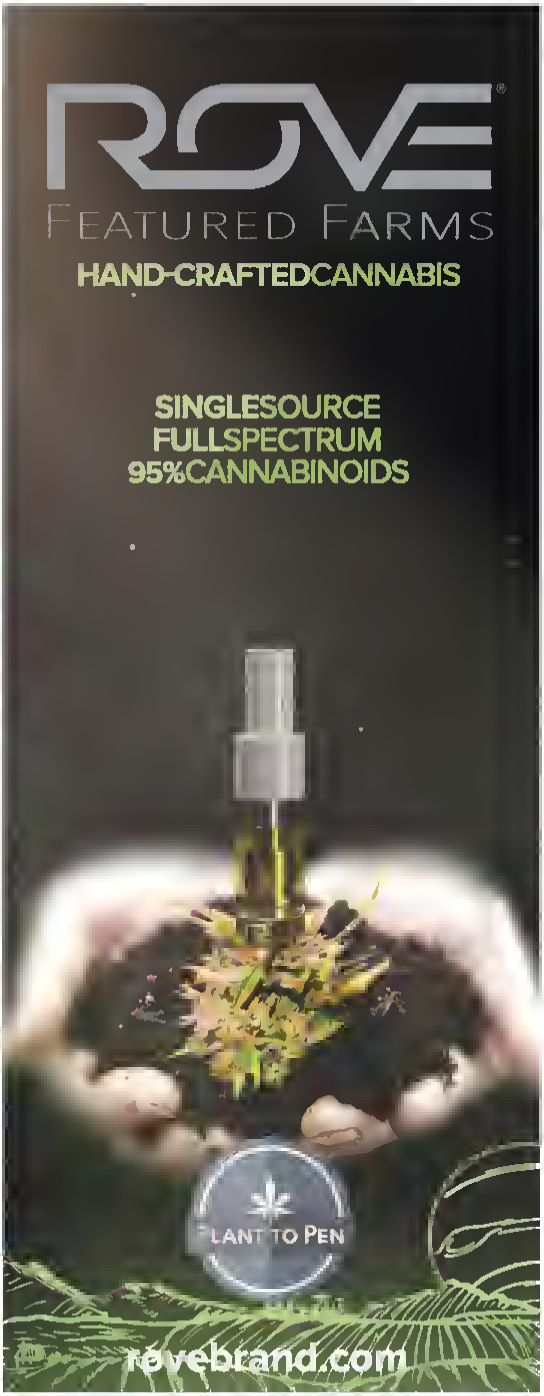
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So how do you start the ball rolling to gain the necessary acceptance?

The best thing we can do as the cannabis community is, instead of getting a bunch of press for helping charities, why not start a cannabis-education program like anti-drunk driving programs? We could advocate a don't-drive-high program for kids. We could actually have them come in and educate them on the dark side . Cannabis has some positive effects, ultimately; there is enough research that we've developed a narrative that cannabis isn't all bad. But we must recognize a dark side to it as well. Why not, as an industry, wrap our arms around that and say you shouldn't drive high? We should educate the youth that you should not use cannabis irresponsibly. Whether you are not using it, you are going to in the future or you are using but you are not supposed to, here are the ramifications. We've had the DARE program and the MADD program; the [cannabis] industry should be tasked with educational programs like these as well.

Starting with something like that and building ties could lead to the cannabis community branching out to other charity causes

This is the intersection we are at. We don't necessarily need to be in youth facilities, but that being said, it wouldn't hurt to push for responsible cannabis use because that is also better for our industry. It could erase the negative press and bad headlines. Operating a motor vehicle [while high on cannabis] is not good for us as a society and a business. We don't need those headlines. I hate to draw parallels with the alcohol industry—we are two totally separate things—but there has been some messaging like that. For instance, Anheuser Busch and their drunken-driving campaigns. We will not be building parks and calling it Pot Park—I get that.

So the kind of charitable programs you are thinking of would extend beyond minors, correct?

Yes, we should be saying we prefer responsible adult usage. Ultimately, we should be thinking of what can be done with abuse, and what more can we do? We could support drug counseling; that could be the next evolution of outreach to the communities. The cannabis industry could become a leader in connecting people to the right kinds of resources. We could become the philanthropic leader in paying for free treatment facilities. An added value of cannabis is it can be a pathway to weaning people off heavier narcotics. It may not be the right thing for everyone, but certainly that idea is based on popular data that's out there and consumable for the masses. And more studies are being done to find more data points for a role for cannabis in medicine.

Is there any hope that in the future, it will get easier for the cannabis industry to connect with community charities?

As time goes on, people tend to understand overall. Abusing alcohol and smoking tobacco are still considered vices, and the average person kind of understands that cannabis does not quite rise to the same level. Violence has been attributed to alcohol consumption. The side effects are horrible. It is certainly consciousness-altering. Not a lot of people sit back and consume alcohol and say it is helping to sharpen their focus. Instead, it can lead to anxiety and depression, just like becoming dependent on opiates. Many in the cannabis industry take a holistic approach to the mind, body and spirit. Yoga is a big part of this community, as are jiu jitsu and other athletics. Enough people entered the cannabis space for the right reason. Many are truly well-grounded, spiritual people who believe the world should be a better place and want to know what they can do to effect positive change. The cannabis sector has, per capita, a higher ratio of people concerned about the environment than a cross-section of the population. There is a positive message to responsible cannabis use. As time goes on, in the next decade, that will be more firmly planted in the average American's mind.

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

FIGHTING HUNGER IS PART OF BLOOM FARMS' BUSINESS PLAN

BY NIKKI NELSEN

Having grown up in California's Calaveras County, the younger sibling of the Emerald Triangle (a.k.a. Cannabis County), Michael Ray always had pot as a part of his life. He learned how to grow the plant at a young age, but his future was really put in motion in 2009, when the Golden State began to shift toward selling medical cannabis and Ray started Bloom Farms.

Calaveras is a poor county; Ray had discovered that one in six families there suffer from hungar, which he thought was unacceptable. Inspired by the efforts of larger companies, Ray decided to make Bloom Farms a one-for-one business, meaning that for every cannabis purchase, Bloom Farms donates a meal to someone in need. "I told myself I would try to make a dent in that problem," Ray says. "When I started Bloom Farms, I made it our core mission to fight food insecurity."

Starting with the San Francisco Marin Food Bank in 2015, Bloom Farms began to receive recognition and offers to join more partnerships, eventually making relationships with nine food banks, including the Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services, the Alameda County Community Food Bank, the SF Marin Food Bank, World Harvest, Merced County Food Bank, the Redwood Empire Food Bank, the San Diego Food Bank and the Second Harvest Food Bank. Through such affiliations throughout Southern California and Nevada, the company has provided nearly 2 million meals through THC and CBD product sales.

Everything the Bay Area-based business sells is 100 percent natural and includes flowers, wax cartridges and CBD products. One of the company's top sellers is the hemp CBD tinctura that came out in January. Its oil products do not contain petroleum-based solvents, and it uses FDA-grade, BPA-free vape products. Every product is also lab-tested for potency and to provide the highest quality.

Ray, who is Bloom Farms' CEO, says his goal to bring a safe and delightful experience to all who use the company's products and that he hopes to provide a good life view through cannabis. Bloom Farms also supports local farmers in sourcing products. "We believe very much that a part of the foundation of the company is also to support local agriculture and support the small farmers, so we work with farmers all over the state," Ray says. "We support the ecosystem, which is made up of thousands of farmers."

Ray also hosts demo days to answer all cannabis-related questions. The aim is to promote a healthy mind, body and soul through yoga and other wellness and fitness practices. Outreach extends into the kitchen, as Bloom Farms staff host "Bloom Appetite" events in the Bay Area and Los Angeles County at which guests can taste cannabis-infused food dishes.

Bloom Farms is among the cannabis companies seeking through its actions to remove the negative stigma that surrounds the industry. "There's lots of education that needs to happen because consumers are learning as they go," Ray says. "With adult-use cannabis in California, we have a lot of new consumers who are using cannabis again for the first time in years, and the industry has changed."

Ray is also looking to help more in Orange County. "We are looking and talking to people," he says. "We are pretty methodical about how we pick up and work with our food bank partners, and Orange County would be an area we would love to work with."

Locally, Bloom Farms products are sold at six locations in Santa Ana and Costa Mesa. And though you can find more throughout Southern California and Nevada, Ray dreams of one day taking his business even farther.

"We have major plans for the future," he says. "I would love to see Bloom Farms products sold nationwide, as well as internationally."

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON BLOOM FARMS, VISIT GETBLOOMFARMS.COM

55 HYDROPONICS PUTS THE GREEN IN GREEN THUMBS

BY NIKKI NELSEN

As Will Fennal walks through his store, which sells everything for your home gardening needs, customers approach with questions—many of which concern growing cannabis.

Armstrong Garden Center, this is not. At 55 Hydroponics, Fennel will explain to guests seeking advice on any plant how much better hydroponic growing can be compared to sticking a seed or young plant into dirt outdoors. He sells a variety of soils and nutrients, and he and his staff are super-knowledgeable, especially when it comes to cannabis, as all have all grown the plant at one time or another.

Hydroponics should be someone's first step, according to Fennel, who recommends visiting mom-and-pop shops such as his and comparing the experience to larger shops, where the staff might not be as knowledgeable. For example, a hydroponic store can teach you more about water conservation. Growing is a learning process, Fennel maintains, and the more you know, the better your plant is.

55 Hydroponics attracts large-scale industry growers who distribute to dispensaries in Orange and Los Angeles counties. Some even go to the store's staff with their own growing questions. "We get to meet big-time growers because we do have a couple of clients in the legal world in the [recreational] market that are big players who produce great products," Fennal says. "And I get to pick their brains all the time, which helps me become a better grower."

For beginners, one can start with implementing the right soil and regular watering to see how the process works. The 55 Hydroponics staff also recommends against using too many nutrients when beginning to grow, as that could end up hurting the plant. "I tell everyone, 'Just throw it in dirt and see how the plant grows,'" Fennel says. "That way, you don't get discouraged and waste money on a lot of expensive nutrients that work, but they don't necessarily know what they're doing."

Deciding where to grow, whether indoors or outdoors, comes down to price. People who choose outdoor growing have to be aware they are working with the environment, so extra care is important. The staff also recommends a butterfly net or pesticides to keep the bugs away, as well as using Monterray B2 once a week to keep caterpillars off your plants.

Growing pot indoors requiras a room or tent that will provide a full six hours of darknass when plants are prematura and 12 total hours of night per day when they are mature. Lights and proper air exchange ara also needed.

"When you are outdoors, you ara at tha marcy of the environmant," Fannal says. "Indoors, you can create your environment, and that's the banefi t thera. Indoor-grown plants are a little more potent, but indoor to outdoor is just parsonal prafarenca."

For the more skilled growers, the 55 Hydroponics staff racommends deep-water culture growing to yield fuller and larger buds. "When you grow in that setting, you ara using way less water, fewer nutrients, a lot less waste, [and] you get a bigger yield and avarything else grows fastar, so it's just a little lass of averything and you get mora out," Fennal says.

The shop also sells a variety of CBD products, which seems to have created its own customer base. "People come in just for CBD stuff," Fennel says. "I don't know how they even hear about it, but they come in and find it because it does work and it's safe."

Plans are afoot for 55 Hydroponics to host classes in the fundamentals of growing a variaty of plants, including cannabis.

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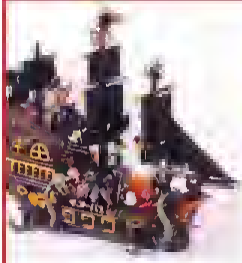

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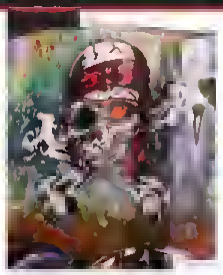

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BEST OF TOKE

BY JEFFERSON VANBILLIARD

Collected here are some of our favorite recent products from the Toke of the Week column that runs in OC Weekly and on ocweekly.com's PotPlus page. Happy smoking!

COURTESY OF THE CURE COMPANY

Nipsey's Marathon OG

On March 31, at approximately 3:50 p.m., a man entered the parking lot of rapper Nipsey Hussle's flagship clothing store in Los Angeles, Marathon, and fired several shots at a group of men that included the Crenshaw native. Born Ermias Joseph Asghedom, he was known for his activism and staunch belief in ending the gun violence that had plagued his South Los Angeles neighborhood for decades. In a joint partnership with the Cure Co., Nipsey's Marathon OG will produce some of the hardest-hitting effects this side of Slauson Avenue. The robust flavors from this expertly cultivated Indica will leave you comatose mere minutes after exhaling a deep, lemon-scented stream of pure ganja goodness. Proceeds from every eighth ($48) goes directly to Hussle's family and their charitable efforts toward empowering the young, impoverished people in South Los Angeles. *Available at New Generation, 3700 W. Segerstrom Ave., Ste. A, Santa Ana, (657) 900-8200; newgenerationoc.com.*

Nug Sunshine OG

OG Kush is known for its heavy-hitting potency, with all its THC testing in the upper 20s and lower 30s percentage-wise. Nug's aptly named Sunshine OG is no exception. What sets Sunshine apart is the uplifting and euphoric effects that help to balance and temper a mellower OG feel, plus, there's a potent smell of summer fruits with mild skunkyness. This product is the perfect choice for smokers who love the power of OG but want to stay functional while poolside this summer. *Available at MedMen, 2141 S. Wright St., Santa Ana, (714) 515-8506, www.medmen.com.*

COURTESY OF NUG

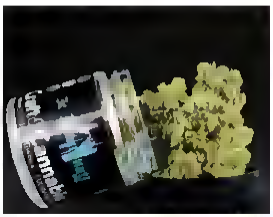
Biscotti

I'd be willing to bet that most people reading this wouldn't be able to pick biscotti out of a lineup of cookies. However, if you were to replace those cookies with those gorgeous flowers, they'd stand out as though they were diamonds in the rough. To be honest, most of the flowers we choose to smoke have a lineage so crossed it would make a Southern family blush. That's why I have a hard time getting excited over anything other than cannabis that is labeled as such. Some of the tastiest buds we've smoked have been in the hybrid realm, and Biscotti is no different. Its snow-capped peaks will keep you frosty when the temperature rises above 80 degrees. We can't get enough of the floral haze that rises as each cultivated bud is ablaze. An eighth of it will set you back $60. *Available at Connected Cannabis Co., 2400 Pullman St., Ste. B, Santa Ana, (714) 229-4464; connectedcannabisco.com.*

COURTESY OF CONNECTED CANNABIS CO

Illuminati OG

I don't understand conspiracies. Every theory—whether it's the Earth being flat, homosexual frogs or Canada secretly being the source of 9/11—only works if everyone involved keeps their mouth shut. The problem with that is nobody can keep a secret, and unfortunately, I am no different. That's why I'm writing about the stuff those fat cats in Congress don't want you to know about. 3C Farms has done some great work growing what could be our favorite Indica strain so far this year. Brilliant green clusters absolutely dripping in multiple shades of wild orange hairs will have you off your feet in no time, while the dense smoke stands to smash your palate into oblivion. The lineage of the Illuminati remains a mystery, but there's no conspiracy behind the fast-acting flowers' ability to relax you from head to toe. *Available at the Joint, 1325 E. St. Andrew Place, Santa Ana, (714) 945-3420.*



COURTESY OF 3C FARMS

Wedding Cake

Love, tenderness and sexual intimacy are three pillars of a happy marriage, but we aren't talking about tying the knot when we mention this pungent strain from the folks at Cream of the Crop. Enjoy a double dose of dense, trichome-rich dankness from this delectable treat while celebrating your single life or arguing with that special person about where to eat when hunger finally strikes. Bred from the lineage of Girl Scout Cookies crossed with Cherry Pie, expect these flowers' tart vanilla scent to take you on a honeymoon that you won't want to end. Our stash lasted less than the time it took for you to read this, so we are crossing our fingers that a first-anniversary batch is on the way. *Available at Super Clinik, 2525 S. Birch St., Santa Ana, (714) 557-2050; superclinik.com.*

COURTESY OF CREAM OF THE CROP

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Chris Glew is one of the first litigators in Orange County to focus on Cannabis cases. Awarded Best Cannabis Attorney by OC Weekly, Glew is an author and speaker on all Cannabis related activities. He has appeared on CNN, NBC, ABC, Fox and has co-hosted a radio and internet broadcast on Cannabis. He's also featured writer for many national and local media outlets on regulatory issues for Cannabis.

Glew has a [illegible] numerous clients in Cannabis licensing all over the State of California. Acting as Lead Counsel for the Santa Ana Cannabis Association, he's also the founder of the California Cannabis Bar Association.

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